

Investigator's Report

Detective

Case Information

Investigator's Name: _____ Date: _____

Case File #: 004 _____

Case Name: Fossil Research _____

Location: Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, CO _____

Observations:

What do you see when you look at a fossil? Paleontologists learn a lot from looking at fossils. Sometimes you can see a whole insect or leaf, but sometimes only part. They learn from the fossils by comparing the fossilized organisms to living organisms. Do you see any similarities between the Florissant fossils and organisms that are alive today? How about differences?

Questions and Hypotheses

In this case, scientists have already devised some techniques for investigating fossils and gathering information from them. The floristic method is used to compare fossil plants to similar plants that exist today. The physiognomic method is used to compare characteristics and adaptations of fossil plants with the same features on modern plants. Find out how to use these two techniques, then use them to write some hypotheses about the Florissant fossils.

1. How do scientists learn from fossils?

2. What organisms are found in the Florissant fossils?

3. What was the environment like when these organisms were alive?

Now that you have hypotheses written, start looking at the evidence to see if it supports your hypotheses. You will need to visit these leads to gather evidence for your case. Use the space below to take notes.

Floristic Method:

Physiognomic Method:

Reconstructing the Past:

Now that you have hypotheses written, start looking at the evidence to see if it supports your hypotheses. You will need to visit these leads to gather evidence for your case. Use the space below to take notes.

Age Dating:

Tree Rings:

Climate and Elevation:

Results and Conclusions

Verification

Investigator's Signature: _____ Detective

Detective